

Testimony of Amy C. Mannion
Connecticut School Counselor Association
in regards to

H.B. No. 5037- AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE 30, 2023.

Appropriations Subcommittee on Elementary and Secondary Education

Public Hearing - February 17, 2022

Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France and respected members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Amy Mannion and I am a school counselor at Bethel Middle School in Bethel, CT. Thank you for the opportunity to offer testimony regarding HB5037- An Act Adjusting the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June 30, 2023. **Specifically, I am here today to testify about the importance of school counselors and the need to fund additional school counselors so that every student has access to a school counselor.**

Personally, I have seen the needs of students increasing in terms of both the breadth and depth of the challenges and emotional difficulties they are facing. Furthermore, the field has been impacted by COVID-19 and the pandemic has caused additional challenges. As my District's counseling department coordinator, I have also seen the lack of access students have to school counselors, especially at the elementary level. In our grade 3-5 school, we have only 1 counselor for 683 students. The need to have more school supports due to higher needs is real and urgent and is not going to go away.

School counselors impact student learning by providing safety, connections and resources so that students can be available and ready to learn, despite whatever challenges they are facing. Additionally, school counselors in Bethel provide suicide screeners, college and career lessons, and student success plans that are delivered to all students. For many students, the difficulties they face both in and out of school are only remedied by the work they do with their school counselor. If we can't access our students because we have too many and we are spread too thin, we are missing the opportunity to build connections, provide support and literally save lives.

I would ask that the appropriations committee consider allocating money specifically for school counseling and the hiring of more school counselors. This is important to the future of our children in CT.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Amy C. Mannion

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